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SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MEXICO

by

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SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMIPICI   Mexicana de Internet

ANATEL   Nacional de Telecomunicaciones

CNH   National Strike Council

GIEI   Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts

INEE   National Institute for the Evaluation of Education

NCoC   National Conference on Citizenship

NGO   nongovernmental organization

NPR   National Public Radio

OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAN   National Action Party

PRD   Party of the Democratic Revolution

PRI   Institutional Revolutionary Party

SMT   social movement theory

UNAM   National Autonomous University of Mexico

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#LaVidaGrad #NPS #Done

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

According to Statista, as of September 2015, Facebook—the world's largest social network in terms of global reach and number of active users—had an 81 percent reach in the United States and 1.55 billion active users worldwide.[1] Over 307 million of Facebook users are European, while 51 million are Mexican.[2] The average user's age ranges between 25 and 34 years, and Facebook's link to share or like media content is viewed across 10 million websites daily, according to the marketing site Zephoria.[3] The potential of reaching billions of users motivates a myriad of entertainment industries, businesses, and social, civic and political organizations to leverage social media to promote their ideas or products.[4] This research concentrates on understanding social media as a driver of civic engagement in society, activists, and political candidates in Mexico. Has social media fostered civic engagement in Mexico?

The term *civic engagement* can be defined in several ways. According to Richard Adler and Judy Goggin, civic engagement can be "the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future."[5] Robert Putnam defines civic engagement in terms of social capital, as "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives."[6] The United States Institute

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[1] Statista, "Number of Monthly Active Facebook Users Worldwide," *Statista*, accessed November 28, 2015, http://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/.

[2] Francisco Rubio Egea, "51 Millones de Mexicanos Ya Están En Facebook," Tecnologia, *Expansion En Alianza Con CNN*, (May 27, 2014), http://mexico.cnn.com/tecnologia/2014/05/27/51-millones-de-mexicanos-ya-estan-en-facebook.

[3] Dan Noyes, "Top 20 Facebook Statistics," *Zephoria Inc.*, accessed November 28, 2015, https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/.

[4] Adam Lella, "Which Social Networks Have the Most Engaged Audience?," *comSCore*, April 2, 2015, https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/Which-Social-Networks-Have-the-Most-Engaged-Audience.

[5] Richard P. Adler and Judy Goggin, "What Do We Mean By 'Civic Engagement'?," *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): Preface, doi:10.1177/1541344605276792.

[6] Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, no. 4 (1995): 664–83, doi:10.2307/420517.

of Peace sees civic engagement as a necessary condition for stable governance and "a condition in which every citizen has the means to actively engage in the public sphere, including political processes."[7] Thus, given the broad range of processes that can be categorized as civic engagement, this research defines civic engagement as four specific activities: civic awareness, collective identity, group participation, and political activism. The thesis utilizes these four categories as a means of thoroughly analyzing an abstract reality that categorize the ways in which people act to improve conditions for themselves and others.

B.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The emergence of social media platforms—for example, LinkedIn (2003), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), and Twitter (2006)—afforded the world the opportunity to keep in touch with family and friends in real time, regardless of location, bridging distance, time, and expense constraints.[8] Since their introduction, social media networks have evolved in reach, audience, and purpose, making these network platforms too significant to ignore.[9]

Social media increases access to political opportunities. Understanding social media's role in the development of civic engagement in Mexico is important for several reasons. First, in the 1990s, as Mexico's social and civic organizations became free of the hegemonic grip of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), more civic associations started to emerge, such as environmental groups, election watch groups, and women's movements.[10] However, as Wada notes, in Mexico, "political opportunities may not have opened to all social groups uniformly. Even when political opportunities have

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[7] United States Institute of Peace, "Civic Participation and Empowerment," *United States Institute of Peace*, accessed November 29, 2015, http://www.usip.org/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction-the-web-version/8-stable-governance/civic-partic.

[8] Summer Harlow and Dustin Harp, "Collective Action on the Web," *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 4, doi:10.1080/1369118X.2011.591411.

[9] Noyes, "Top 20 Facebook Statistics."

[10] Leonardo Avritzer, "Civil Society in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: Between Democratic Deepening, Social Fragmentation, and State Crisis," in *Civil Society and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Richard Feinberg, Carlos H. Waisman, and Leon Zamosc (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 39, http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781403983244_3.

become favorable, social groups are not equally capable of exploiting such opportunities."[11] Thus, researching how social media, through its extensive reach, is transforming civic society could aid in bringing political opportunities to sectors that otherwise could not be reached.[12]

Also, studying social media can be helpful for activists, scholars, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that wish to know how these tools can be leveraged to raise civic awareness, build social capital, promote group collaboration, or bring about political change—all activities of a healthy civic society.[13] In Mexico's case, authors Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García argue that "social media is increasingly important for political and social activism in Mexico... [because it is] influencing government decision making and shaping the relationships between governments and citizens."[14]

Further, in terms of U.S. national security, social media impact in civil engagement in Mexico can also mean that transformation could also occur for less-than-civic means—what Putnam refers to as inverse social capital.[15] Understanding the how' and whys, then, is key to lessening inverse social capital. Vegh's defines political activism as "a politically motivated movement … comprised of proactive actions to achieve a certain goal or of reactive actions against controls and the authorities imposing them."[16] So, a call for action online can start in a pacific manner and quickly escalate through the different stages of a movement: awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization, and action/reaction.[17] Given U.S.-Mexico economic, trade,

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[11] Takeshi Wada, "Who Are the Active and Central Actors in the 'rising Civil Society' in Mexico?," *Social Movement Studies* 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 128, doi:10.1080/14742837.2013.860876.

[12] Ibid., 129.

[13] Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out," 670.

[14] Rodrigo Sandoval-Almazan and J. Ramon Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media: Twitter, YouTube, and the Mexican Political Movement #I'm Number 132," in *2013 46th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)*, 2013, 1704, doi:10.1109/HICSS.2013.161.

[15] Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out," 665.

[16] Sandor Vegh, "Classifying Forms of Online Activism: The Case of Cyberprotests against the World Bank," in *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*, ed. Martha McCaughey and Michael D Ayers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 71–72.

[17] Ibid., 72.

and geopolitical interests and foreign relations, understanding how social media is influencing cyberactivism including hacktivism can benefit security practices.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature regarding the extent to which social media transforms civic engagement in a society is divided into four broad arguments. First, some analysts argue that, as social media platforms take an offline activity—whether a group meeting, a protest, or awareness—and extend its range by broadcasting it online, they are shaping civic engagement.[18] In turn, the additional reach offers opportunities for cooperation and therefore increases social capital among a wider online and also offline community.[19] A second narrative poses social media platforms as generators of original civic activities that are independent of offline actions.[20] Here, the social media networks provide a new phenomenon in which social media enables regular citizens to be the directors rather than the spectators of change.[21] Third, the literature contends that social media sites can soften civic engagement rather than activate it. For example, a seemingly engaged person may join or "like" a charity organization and, by doing so, feel their action is enough civic engagement; however, only some of the group members contribute monetarily or donate volunteer time to the cause. Thus, for some researchers a soft level of engagement brings a debate of activism versus slacktivism.[22] Finally, a smaller portion of the literature argues that social media can alienate a portion of society as technology has inherent limitations, such as a lack of appropriate infrastructure, limited reach, or poor design. Socio-economic factors also affect the influence social media has on the population;

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[18] Summer Harlow, "Adapting, Adopting and Diffusing: Leveraging Web 2.0 Tools for Activism in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Communication Research* 3, no. 1 (August 25, 2013): 11.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Amy Gahran, "Jay Rosen on 'The People Formerly Known as the Audience,'" June 29, 2006, http://www.poynter.org/news/76046/jay-rosen-on-the-people-formerly-known-as-the-audience/.

[22] Kirk Kristofferson, Katherine White, and John Peloza, "The Nature of Slacktivism: How the Social Observability of an Initial Act of Token Support Affects Subsequent Prosocial Action," *Journal of Consumer Research* 40, no. 6 (April 1, 2014): 1149–66, doi:10.1086/674137.

issues such as poverty, aversion to technology, age, and education level make social media reach far from universal.[23]

1.   Transformation through Expansion

A segment of the literature sees social media as capable of promoting civic activities that are already taken place offline and extending them to a greater network.[24] Merging and expanding physical networks into a virtual domain opens up the opportunity for greater civic engagement and social connectedness, difficult to achieve through other media channels.[25] However, analysts debate whether social media is capable of building social capital or group trust that can promote cooperation for the benefit of the community. For example, in research regarding how social media helps British charities and nonprofit organizations achieve their goals, a survey participant described the benefit of social media this way: "it allows geographically spread officials and volunteers to communicate and coordinate and feel part of the organization."[26] Similarly, another respondent expressed that "social media tools have enabled us to develop this [information exchange] more year-round, further building loyalty."[27]

Nevertheless, some analysists report disadvantages. The Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland noted that qualitative analysis showed that social media organizers often broadcast information indiscriminately to their online customers and forget to connect with the physical people behind the virtual device.[28] Similarly, in 2010, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC)—the

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[23] Dustin Harp, Ingrid Bachmann, and Lei Guo, "The Whole Online World Is Watching: Profiling Social Networking Sites and Activists in China, Latin America and the United States," *International Journal of Communication* 6 (March 29, 2012): 304.

[24] Summer Harlow, "Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and an Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline," *New Media & Society* 14, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 225, doi:10.1177/1461444811410408.

[25] Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 62–67, doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0002.

[26] Suw Charman-Anderson, "Making the Connection: The Use of Social Technologies in Civil Society," 2000, 20, http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/making-the-connection-the-use-of-social-technologies-in-civil-society/.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 3.

agency responsible for assessing civic health in the United States—stated that "the Internet appears to build civic health." [29] The NCoC was cautious and did not make a definitive claim as to whether social platforms are shaping group connectedness. "Does technology force isolation behind computer screens and telephone devices, or does it provide more convenient outlets to take civic action, stay informed, and express political views?"[30] The NCoC assessment called for further research on the matter and placed education, family, and wealth at the forefront of civic engagement in America, arguing that "the road to engagement starts at the dinner table."[31]

2.   Transformation through Creation

A second argument contends that the Internet has created new nodes of civic activism independent of those offline civic engagement opportunities.[32] In her 2012 study on social media and its impact on social movements in Guatemala, Harlow concludes: "This was not a movement organized offline where the Internet served merely as a tool to facilitate mobilization. Instead, the interviews and content analysis demonstrated that it was via the union of tens of thousands of Guatemalans on Facebook that a justice and reform movement was born online and then moved offline." [33]

Such a phenomenon places the citizens as active creators of civic change rather than mere recipients. As New York University journalism professor Rosen argues, "The people formerly known as the audience are those who *were* on the receiving end of a media system... and who *today* are not in a situation like that at *all.*"[34] Similarly, during his 2004 keynote opening remarks, Tom Curley, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Associated Press also asserted, "as we have seen so clearly in the last year or so, consumers will want to use the two-way nature of the Internet to become active

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[29] National Conference on Citizenship, "2010 Civic Health Assessment: Executive Summary" (National Conference on Citizenship), accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.ncoc.net/CHAExecutiveSummary2010.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Harlow, "Social Media and Social Movements," 226.

[33] Ibid., 240.

[34] Gahran, "Jay Rosen on 'The People Formerly Known as the Audience.'"

participants themselves in the exchange of news and ideas. The news, as a 'lecture,' is giving way to the news as a 'conversation.'"[35]

Similarly, Harlow and Harp argue that, in Latin America, the emerging "counter hegemonic alternative media helps to empower everyday citizens and communities typically excluded by the mainstream media."[36] The authors cite Nicodemus to reference examples in which the media broadcasts of news "emphasizing continual defeat and providing a rationale for residents to opt out of the political process altogether" would leave Latin America citizens thinking "they cannot change society."[37] The technological transformation, Harlow and Harp argue, empowered Latin American activists to use alternative media to disseminate their own political agenda.[38] This citizen journalist phenomenon is already taking place in different manners in cities across Mexico. An example is a group of comedians called Los Supercívicos who produce and record videos that expose not only the government's failure to fulfill basic social obligations, such as maintaining safe public roads and infrastructure, but also those citizens who disobey the rule of law. Arturo Hernandez, creator of Los Supercívicos, explains the group's mission: "Los Supercívicos is about opening the citizens' eyes, and prov[ing] that if the government is not doing so [promoting civic behavior] … we can make it happen."[39]

3.   Token Transformation

Thus far in the literature review, the arguments have seen social media platforms as conduits for active civic engagement; however, some analysts argue that social media

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[35] "PressThink: The People Formerly Known as the Audience," accessed November 28, 2015, http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html.

[36] Summer Harlow and Dustin Harp, "Alternative Media in a Digital Era: Comparing News and Information Use among Activists in the United States and Latin America," 2013, 29, http://dadun.unav.edu/handle/10171/35561.

[37] Ibid., 30.

[38] Ibid.

[39] "Los Supercívicos, Héroes Urbanos Para Una Ciudad Caótica | Máspormás," accessed October 19, 2015, http://www.maspormas.com/2015/09/24/los-supercivicos-heroes-urbanos-para-una-ciudad-caotica/. Los Supercívicos videos can be accessed via: Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Supercivicosmx/?fref=ts; YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/houstonprograma, or through their Twitter account at: https://twitter.com/Supercivicosmx.

provides a path to symbolic civic engagement or "slacktivism."[40] In essence, this school of thought agrees that the Internet is a great broadcaster of information, but the problem becomes how to assess whether the information received through this means makes a difference in civic engagement. As such, according to McCafferty, "Social media fails where it matters most: to change the hearts and minds of the public, and effect real change."[41] Thus, some Internet users believe that, by clicking "like," an action has taken place. Is clicking "like" enough action?

In terms of political engagement, Vitak et al. also ponder, "Do political activities on Facebook affect political participation among young voters? Or do these activities represent another example of feel-good participation that has little real-world impact, a concept often referred to as slacktivism?"[42] Others authors such as Christensen have a less harsh perspective. Christensen claims that "[slacktivism] is at worst harmless fun and can at best help invigorate citizens."[43]

Mexico's social media and communication analysts are skeptics. In 2011, the advisor to the Mexican Commission on Science and Technology, León Felipe Sánchez claimed: "we do not have enough information to ensure that Mexican citizens have generated real social change through digital media."[44] Similarly, Acosta quotes Pisanty as expressing that "Twitter is not cyberactivism … [activism means to] propose solutions and implement them, and for that [Mexican citizens] have some way to go."[45] Pisanty

[40] Kristofferson, White, and Peloza, "The Nature of Slacktivism," 1149.

[41] Dennis McCafferty, "Activism vs. Slacktivism," *Communications of the ACM* 54, no. 12 (December 1, 2011): 17, doi:10.1145/2043174.2043182.

[42] Jessica Vitak et al., "It's Complicated: Facebook Users' Political Participation in the 2008 Election," *CyberPsychology, Behavior & Social Networking* 14, no. 3 (March 2011): 1, doi:10.1089/cyber.2009.0226.

[43] Henrik Serup Christensen, "Political Activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or Political Participation by Other Means?," *First Monday* 16, no. 2 (February 2, 2011): 1, http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3336.

[44] Nelly Acosta, "'Activismo Digital Aún Es Bajo En México,'" *El Economista*, accessed October 20, 2015, http://eleconomista.com.mx/tecnociencia/2011/07/19/activismo-digital-aun-bajo-mexico.

[45] Ibid.

attributes Mexico's lackluster cyberactivism to its uncommitted culture toward organizing and addressing pressing social issues.[46]

4. Transformation Still Forthcoming

A small portion of the literature argues that social media cannot transform the population it cannot reach or those unwilling to use or afraid of technology.[47] Similarly, the NCoC fears that "being disconnected from information altogether—or not accessing information often—clearly interferes with civic engagement; those who do not consume news are far less likely to be engaged in all indicators of civic engagement."[48]

5. Conclusion of Literature Review

As discussed, social media's effect on civic engagement holds several arguments. First, the emergence of social media platforms has broadened the possibility of reaching and influencing new networks of the global population that, prior to the Internet's existence, were difficult if not impossible to reach. However, whether the extended reach brings about social connectedness or stronger collective identity is still a contentious point among analysts and scholars. Some of the literature argues that the Internet places citizens at the forefront of the civic and political action, while other literature argues the Internet gives way to a complacent or passive form of activism. Additionally, while social media activism and civic awareness are mostly beneficial, online media networks can be a powerful tool for hackers, radical activists, and organizations that technically bring a community together but can harm rather than benefit the society. Finally, technology brings about a level of inherent problems. Some concerns are that social media, especially in emerging countries, can be difficult to access due to infrastructure or economic constraints, and, even where there is connectivity, some portions of society are just adverse or unwilling to access it for security reasons, lack of know-how, or apathy. Thus, social media has the potential of alienating a portion of the population.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Summer Harlow, "Social Change and Social Media: Latin American Activists' Use of Digital Tools in the Face of the Digital Divide," *Latin American Studies Association* (May 2012): 24.

[48] National Conference on Citizenship, "Key Findings: 2010 Civic Health Assessment: Executive Summary," *National Conference on Citizenship*, September 16, 2010, http://ncoc.net/103k117.

D.   POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

How is social media transforming civic engagement in Mexico? This research offers and explores two hypotheses.

H1: Social media has transformed civic engagement in Mexico by reaching new sectors of the population and opening new nodes for active civic participation of its citizens.

Potential explanation: literature arguments and evidence find correlation between social media and social capital; social media and collectivity identity; social media and activism; and social media and civic awareness—all functions of an engaged civil society.

H2: Social media has not created more or less civic engagement in Mexico in comparison to other periods in its history.

Potential explanation: Foweraker and Craig claim, "Mexican political history... is one of constant, contained conflict and changes. It is a myth to believe that change is a recent phenomenon." [49] As such, the authors assert, "It is therefore too early and too risky to speak of a transformation of a political culture that... is so deeply rooted in the past."[50] A comparative analysis of Mexico's civic engagement prior to and after the emergence of social media would have to be conducted to assess whether social media has made a significant change.

E.   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design will be based on the review of the historical literature, first and second hand scholarly works, credible surveys, research studies, polls, think thanks, mainstream news articles, and statistics regarding the Mexico's civic engagement prior to the emergence of social media (1960–1993). The aim of this portion of the review will be to provide an overview of Mexico's civic society and its relationship to the state. The

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[49] Joe Foweraker and Ann L. Craig, *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1990), 98.

[50] Ibid., 100.

second portion of research will draw parallels and intersections in the literature since the emergence of social media (1994–present). In this manner, a historical comparison analysis will be drafted to understand the level of influence social media exerts in Mexico's civil society and determine whether the digital platform drives civic action.

F.   THESIS OVERVIEW

The first chapter of the thesis introduced the phenomena that social media's penetration into Mexico presents to its population's civic engagement. The second chapter provides a historical context of Mexico's civic engagement prior to the emergence of digital media into its society. The third chapter presents the evidence of social media's penetration and its influence in Mexico's civil society. The fourth chapter analyzes the evidence presented in the second and third chapters and determines whether Mexico's civil engagement has been transformed by social media. The research concludes by reviewing the arguments and providing suggestions for further research and final conclusions.

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II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MEXICO (1968–1993)

The strength or weakness of a liberal democratic state can be gauged by assessing the efficiency of three factors: the state's ability to maintain legitimate sovereignty, the legitimacy of the state's electoral system, and the strength of the formal institutions that allow for the autonomy of the state's civil society.[51] Since this research centers on civic engagement, emphasis is placed on the last factor: understanding the process Mexico's populace underwent to break from the authoritarianism of the Catholic Church and the state in order to emerge as an autonomous civil society.[52]

Chapter II analyzes the social and political antecedents that led to two events that unequivocally shaped Mexico's history and, pertinent to this research, its civic engagement. First, the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre is analyzed to understand the forces that drove heterogeneous actors to collectively organize, collaborate, and demand to be heard by the authoritarian regime.[53] Second, the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes are examined to identify how the Mexican society self-organized and selflessly filled in the "vacuum of authority" left by a paralyzed government.[54] Third, is an analysis of the aftermath of the two events and their influence in forming an autonomous civil society.

A. MEXICO'S CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH

Latin America had difficulty forming into a civil society because of the subjugation people suffered from both the Catholic Church and the state.[55] Latin

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[51] Fernando I. Salmerón Castro, "Modernidad Y Prácticas Políticas: Democracia, Eslabonamientos Y Mediaciones En La Sociedad Civil (Modernity and Political Practices: Democracy, Links and Mediations in the Civil Society)," Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 64, no. 1 (2002): 31, doi:10.2307/3541480.

[52] John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (New York: Norton, 2001), 66–67.

[53] Carlos Monsiváis, *Entrada Libre: Crónicas De La Sociedad Que Se Organiza* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1987), 21.

[54] Suzanne Bilello, "Mexico: The Rise of Civil Society," *Current History* 95, no. 598 (February 1996): 85.

[55] Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*, 66. Also expressed in (Otero, 1840; Fuentes, 1985; Chasteen, 2001; Avritzer, 2006).

American society is the product of a complex web of imposed, acquired, and existing issues that, according to Geertz, must be untangled to reveal their meaning.[56] So, a brief regional context of religion's influence on civil society is given.

Religion in Latin America—particularly Catholicism—provides a framework for community, a potential source for political mobilization, or understanding the supernatural. For historians such as Schwaller, "Catholicism is the single most important institution in the region, if for no other reason [than] that . . . it remained central to most people's lives over . . . some five hundred years."[57] For pragmatics such as Geertz, religion serves as another authoritarian, hierarchical, and pervasive method of control.[58] In Mexico, as in much of Latin America, the Catholic Church served as both the house of God and of the state. For centuries, the Spanish crown, through the priests, exerted an oppressive economic and ideological grip on the masses. Schwaller explains, "Since the Spanish claims on the New World were based in part on the evangelization of the natives, and the natives paid tribute to the crown, the crown then declared that the cost of Christianizing the natives should be covered by the tribute."[59]

The tribute system imposed by the crown also benefited the Church, Joseph and Henderson quote Otero to drive this point, "The parish priests f[ou]nd their very survival depend[ed] upon the income from their parish *rights*."[60] The economic system became a form of indentured servitude and oppression for the emergence of society. Otero elaborates, "For this reason, these representatives of the God of goodness and mercy ma[d]e it a point not to allow any Indian to be born, to marry, or to die with impunity,

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[56] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *High Points In Anthropology*, ed. Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer, 2 edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 1988), 538.

[57] John Frederick Schwaller, *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America from Conquest to Revolution and beyond* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 1, http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=865342.

[58] Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," 538.

[59] Schwaller, *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America from Conquest to Revolution and beyond*, 81.

[60] Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson, *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Duke University Press, 2009), 228.

that is, without paying the *established rights*."[61] Otero further illustrates the conquistadors' motives for control: "They [sought] success, . . . riches, the privilege of being served by others, and claim to religious righteousness."[62] Lastly, the hegemony of the Church also included ideological suppression. According to historian of Latin American culture, John Charles Chasteen, "All educational institutions were religious, so if knowledge is power (and it is), the church monopolized that power."[63]

B.   MEXICO'S CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

While the Catholic Church played a role in keeping civil society dormant during the colonial period (1492–1810), the state also played a key role. Avritzer argues that the hierarchical structure that emerged as a result of the Spanish colonization in Latin America prevented civil society from forming, "First, because a holistic and hierarchical society . . . such as Peru or Mexico, could not have led to a society of equals; second, because the fusion between the private and the state could not have led to any process of differentiation." [64] Likewise, novelist Carlos Fuentes notes that the Spanish conquistadors had a choice: they could show the power of the state by establishing democratic order (as the British colonizers had done in the United States), or they could rule by an iron fist.[65] The Spaniards chose the latter and destined Latin America to inherit a hierarchical, patriarchal, hegemonic structure. For these reasons, Avritzer argues, the civil society in Latin America remained politically and socially dormant during the nineteenth century.[66]

Chasteen and Bilello argue that the state's use of force in the region has been strategically applied and as such oppression was overtly accepted.[67] As Basáñez attests, hegemony in Latin America derived from the hierarchical system; however, the oppression was consented to by people at the bottom.

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*, 25.

[63] Ibid., 67.

[64] Avritzer, "Civil Society in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century," 38.

[65] Carlos Fuentes, *Latin America, at War with the Past* (New York: CBC Enterprises, 1985), 26–27.

[66] Avritzer, "Civil Society in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century," 36.

[67] Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*, 66–67.; Bilello, 1996, "Mexico: The Rise of Civil Society."

Hegemony contrasts with control by violent force. It is a steady preponderance rather than an iron rule. Though it may seem "soft," this form of political power is resilient and does devastating damage to people at the bottom. When they accept the principle of their own inferiority and, in the old-fashioned phrase, "know their place," they participate in their own subjugation.[68]

In addition to Mexico's colonial and revolutionary turbulent origins, Miguel Basáñez argues that the state's capitalistic concerns caused Mexico's civil society-state relationship to emerge simultaneously as "cooperative and supportive, [as well as] controlling and manipulative." [69] The author argues that the masses and the state were caught in a symbiotic "populist-capitalist" relationship: the people required mobility and social benefits, while the state required corporatism and authoritarianism.[70] Thus under these four forces—populism, capitalism, corporatism, and hegemony—the Mexican political-military hegemony was upheld.[71]

Basáñez explains the state secured ideological hegemony over the society by granting—at least on paper—those requests that resulted in the masses' loyalty and support.[72] For example, the state granted—at least on paper—requests for education, land, labor, and no reelection law reforms by incorporating these demands into the constitution as articles 3, 27, 123, and 83, respectively.[73] However, Basáñez asserts that the social benefits derived from those laws simultaneously "established an institution of control."[74] The efficiency of this scheme lasted almost five decades.[75]

In terms of civil-military relations, Serrano argues that Mexico, unlike most of Latin America, maintained political stability due to three factors: "First, the weight of the

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Miguel Basáñez, *El Pulso de los Sexenios: 20 años de Crisis en México* (México, D.F: Siglo XXI, 1990), 29.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 30–31.

[72] Ibid., 30.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

Revolutionary legacy [created a] generation averse to violence . . . , secondly, the . . . professionalization of the armed forces in combination with deliberate policies aimed at securing and consolidating civilian supremacy over the armed forces; thirdly, the impact of external factors on both the size and orientation of the armed forces in Mexico."[76]

Given the aforementioned systems of control, Latin America's civil society finally emerged during the twentieth century.[77] Avritzer argues that, unlike the binomial concept of a society independent from the state, predominant during the third wave of democratization in Europe, Latin American civil society awoke under a tripartite concept.[78] Based on Gramsci and neo-Tocquevillean models, the concept adds a third element of differentiation: civil society as an independent entity from the state and from political society.[79] A second tripartite model makes a distinction between the civil society, the market, and the state.[80] The tripartite concept reacquainted the poor and the middle class sectors in Latin America and, given the new pressures of the century, provoked new social and political actors to emerge.[81]

Specific to Mexico, Avritzer claims that Brazil, and to certain extent Mexico, emerged as a civic-participatory society: "a concept where civil society organizations broaden the design of local institutions in order to incorporate more participation."[82]

C.   1968 TLATELOLCO STUDENT MOVEMENT

Social movement theorists McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald uphold that when a grievance meets a political opportunity, finds a structure for mobilization, and runs an

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[76] Mónica Serrano, "The Armed Branch of the State: Civil-Military Relations in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 27, no. 2 (1995): 428.

[77] Avritzer, "Civil Society in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century," 36.

[78] Ibid., 36–37.

[79] Ibid., 37.

[80] Ibid., 36–37.

[81] Ibid., 35–37.

[82] Ibid., 39.

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effective marketing campaign, a social movement emerges.[83] Hence, Social Movement Theory (SMT) is used to provide context as to how the Tlatelolco student movement formed and developed; however, emphasis is placed in deriving the movement's relevance in the awakening of civic engagement in Mexico. The analysis will look for patterns in which the students exhibited or promoted: 1) civic awareness, 2) collective identity, 3) collective action, or 4) political activism, aiming to establish a baseline of how society engaged civically prior to the social media revolution.

In Mexico, the 1968 student movements did not originate from a direct confrontation between the government and the national universities. The spark, former student-activist Humberto Musaccho recalls, "had nothing to do with politics."[84] Rather, it began when rival preparatory schools fought over a school game. Raul Alvarez a student-activist explains, "The police pretended to contain the fight by beating up the students in their own campuses."[85] The *granaderos* (riot police) violence was such "that it made an ordinary youth fight, turn into one of the most serious political issues in the nation's history."[86] On July 15, 1968, hundreds of students took to the streets to fight the oppression, giving the movements their official start.[87]

The violent response from the *granaderos* reopened old wounds between society and the state. Braun argues the underlying source of discord began as the students attempted to break the paternal-child relationship forged between society and the state since the Spanish colonial period.[88] The relationship, Braun argues, was built on "false love"—the state showed affection by demanding order and obedience, and the people

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[83] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12–16.

[84] Rolando Arturo Rodriguez, *Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968, Documental Corto Y Bien Explicado [HD]*, accessed June 5, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dk0aXPZeLn0.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Herbert Braun, "Protests of Engagement: Dignity, False Love, and Self-Love in Mexico during 1968," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 3 (1997): 516–17.

expressed discontent through silence.[89] However, the modern and energetic youth with a different ideology no longer prescribed to the state's omnipresence.[90] Historian Sergio Aguayo explains, President Díaz Ordaz resented the protests as the students would publicly disrespect him, calling the president a "racist, liar."[91]

In an interview for National Public Radio (NPR) podcast series *Radio Diaries,* student-activist Antonio Azuela recollects the generational discordance of the time: on one hand, a disinterested (traditional) population accepted the regime's status quo; while, on the other hand, the universities' student bodies complained the system "is not a democracy. And this is not working."[92]

As the movement started taking shape, the students' grievances formalized into six concrete demands to the National Strike Council (CNH):

1. Free political prisoners.
2. Remove the chief of police, the undersecretary to the mayor, and the mayor of Mexico City.
3. Terminate the riot police (granaderos).
4. Repeal Articles 145 and 145b of the Federal Penal Code.[93]
5. Compensate the families of the dead and wounded (of another incident).
6. Waiver responsibility for acts of violence imparted by the authorities through the police, the granaderos, and the army.[94]

Thus, a society's struggle to break from an authoritarianism of oppression fundamentally gave birth to the movement.

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[89] Ibid., 515.

[90] Ibid., 511. Also expressed in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, 1994); William Rossebery's "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 355–66.

[91] Rolando Arturo Rodriguez, *Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968, Documental Corto Y Bien Explicado [HD]*.

[92] "Mexico '68: A Movement, A Massacre, and the 40-Year Search for the Truth," *Radio Diaries*, February 6, 2013, http://www.radiodiaries.org/mexico-68-a-movement-a-massacre-and-the-40-year-search-for-the-truth/.

[93] The repeal was to be applied if any legitimate dissent would void citizens of their opportunities for democratic demonstration or political consciousness or would be considered a threat to national security.

[94] Eugenia Allier Montaño, "Presentes-Pasados Del 68 Mexicano: Una Historización de Las Memorias Públicas Del Movimiento Estudiantil, 1968–2007," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 71, no. 2 (2009): 292.

Having formalized their grievances, the students seized the political opportunity needed to be heard. On October 12, 1968, Mexico City would debut onto the world scene as the first developing country entrusted to host the Olympic Games.[95] *Radio Diaries* podcast highlights the political importance the games represented for the regime: "The Olympics [were] the opportunity to show the world that Mexico [was] no longer a small and backward nation."[96] Elisa Ramirez, a student activist and participant in the movement, recollects the general atmosphere shared by the Mexican people: "We [felt] so civilized, so Americanized."[97] However, in reality, Basáñez asserts that "Mexicans were far from being ruled under a modern democracy."[98] Aguayo explains, "In the sixties, . . . the government controlled everything. Presidents were the equivalent of monarchs; . . .it was forbidden to demonstrate in the center of Mexico City, in the heartland of the country. [Citizens] could not go and express [their] dissent."[99] President Díaz Ordaz could not afford that some frustrated ideological students made the international community question his ability to administer and deliver the Games.[100]

The students' ideology soon became the basis of a marketing campaign strong enough to get the movement off the ground.[101] Student Marcel Fernandez recollects the ideology of the movement: "For the first time [we] had this notion that this country was going to be changed by the power of our convictions."[102] Monsiváis maintains that the students understood that "things [were] irreparably wrong, but decid[ed] to change them nonetheless."[103] Fernandez recalls the force of individuals coming collectively to achieve a greater purpose: "[Students] were together hundreds and hundreds. We had big

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[95] "Mexico," 68.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Basáñez, *El Pulso de los Sexenios*, 30. Also expressed by historian Sergio Aguayo *Radio Diaries, NPR.*

[99] "Mexico '68."

[100] Rolando Arturo Rodriguez, *Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968, Documental Corto Y Bien Explicado [HD]*.

[101] McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, 13.

[102] "Mexico '68."

[103] Monsiváis, *Entrada Libre*, 15.

meetings at the campus; [it was] crowded."[104] Student Miguel Breseda recalls, "You would get in a bus and give a speech and inform the people. Because newspapers wouldn't publish anything. . . . The problem was growing … It sort of entered into the fabric of Mexico City. What we were seeing was an awakening society."[105]

The movement's magnitude peaked on August 27, 1968. Marcelino Perello, a student leader, recalls a key demand of the movement: "We were asking for the President to [come] out and to speak to us."[106] Aguayo underscores the historical and political importance of the masses gathered at the Zocalo: "If ten people protest, well that's dissent—when half a million people protest, then that's the beginning of social revolution."[107] Huerta expresses, "After the huge demonstration we felt sure that they [the regime] could not say no to our demands."[108] Nevertheless, President Díaz Ordaz refused to hold the dialogue the students wanted.

After months of campaigning, the movement began losing momentum, and the students wanted to resume normalcy.[109] The second protest held on October 2, 1968, only drew 4,000–10,000 activists, and moments later it would abruptly and violently come to an end.[110] Breseda remembers the chaos and the exchange of words right before the Mexican Army opened fire: "We are not leaving! … We're not moving. And they take out their bayonets, and put them in their rifles and they start walking towards us."[111] In few seconds, Huerta recalls, "all hell broke loose." [112] Hundreds of students died at the hands of the Mexican Army; however, to this day the exact number is unknown. [113]

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[104] "Mexico '68."

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

D.   1985 MEXICO CITY EARTHQUAKES

If the fifties and sixties were characterized by economic stability, the eighties were a conflictive and politically challenging time for Mexico.[114] Events such as the 1982 economic crisis, the 1985 earthquakes, the 1986–1987 student movements, and the 1988 presidential elections provided a way for civil society to rise and push for democratic ideals.[115]

Civil society slowly developed for the next two decades. Activists were devoted to building grassroots movements and nongovernmental organizations with the purpose of fixing what failed federal policies had tried.[116] On the morning of September 19, 1985, Mexico City was struck by two powerful earthquakes causing grave devastation to the central area of the city and the deaths of more than 10,000 people.[117] Thousands of buildings collapsed in a span of 92 seconds, and for the *capitalinos*,[118] Monsiváis claims, "the smells alone made them vividly aware that the city was not the same."[119] The unexpectedness and magnitude of the disaster, coupled with the stage fright of the government, propelled close to a million people to self-organize and collaborate— "turning the *pueblo* into a society."[120] Amid the chaos, the population faced two eroding forces: forces of nature and the state. But, out of the two, the state was by far the worse. Monsiváis et al. explain that "The city understood that it could not blame the disaster on natural forces; those played a role, but the tragedy was [the] responsibility of those that

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[114] Eugenia Allier Montaño, "Presentes-Pasados Del 68 Mexicano: Una Historización de Las Memorias Públicas Del Movimiento Estudiantil, 1968–2007," Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 71, no. 2 (2009): 299.

[115] Ibid., 302.

[116] Suzanne Bilello, "Mexico: The Rise of Civil Society," *Current History* 95, no. 598 (February 1996): 84.

[117] Alejandra Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil: El Discurso Político Después Del Sismo de 1985," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 76, no. 3 (September 2014): 441.

[118] Term used to refer to people from the country's capital, Mexico City.

[119] Monsiváis, *Entrada libre*, 19.

[120] Alejandra Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil: El Discurso Político Después Del Sismo de 1985," Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 76, no. 3 (julio-septiembre, 2014): 442. México, D.F. ISSN: 0188–2503/14/07603–04.

had utilized the public offices to get rich."[121] As devastating and tragic as the earthquakes were for the Mexican people, the aftershocks they triggered were necessary to awake the civil society.[122]

Hundreds of volunteers from all walks of life arrived driven by "instinct and impulse,"[123] Monsiváis recounts. The masses self-organized to rebuild the city, often making critical on-the-spot decisions and lending assistance even if they did not know how to be doctors, nurses, firemen, policemen—often oblivious to their own danger and fear.[124] This was not a single actor, rather a general community, acting toward the benefit of others—what Putnam refers to as inverse social capital.[125]

Monsiváis contends that aiding the victims of the earthquakes made "Mexico City … claim its power, . . . greatly transcending the limits of mere solidarity. The disaster transformed the people into a government and civil disorder into order. Suddenly, democracy could be attributed to the importance of each person."[126] Bilello agrees that the convergence of tragedy and opportunity showed citizens faced with a paralyzed government—Miguel de la Madrid's administration—they could take effective action on their own.[127]

As the days progressed, the media began covering the victims as they began organizing and claiming restitution for housing, furniture, and general goods—such diverse interest groups emerged that there was a need to create the Single Coordination for Victims organization to consolidate and make sense of the demands.[128] The affected citizens were not passive actors in face of the circumstances; rather, they took matters

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[121] Carlos Monsiváis et al., *Imágenes Y Testimonios del 85: (El Despertar De La Sociedad Civil)* (México, D.F.: Ediciones UníoS!, 2000), 8.

[122] Bilello, "Mexico," 85.

[123] Monsiváis, *Entrada libre*, 18–19.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out."

[126] Monsiváis, *Entrada libre*, 20.

[127] Bilello, "México," 85.

[128] Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil," 448.

into their own hands.[129] From then on, the word *people* meant a person and his or her social sphere. [130] A lot of what would ensue three years later in the 1988 elections was a direct result of the citizens' urgency in wanting a functioning democracy. The idea that the nation's problems—from inflation to corruption—were the result of the state's excessive power became popular discourse.[131] Thus, along with the governmental inefficiency and socioeconomic disenchantments, also came a disagreement between the society and the state. Allier attests that if the 1968 crisis planted the seeds for democracy and the rise of civil society, then the elections of 1988 marked the time to harvest.[132]

E.   AFTERMATH AND IMPACT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

What effects actually took place? How did the 1968 social movement and the earthquake mobilization change the active participation of the public or the development of political movements in Mexico?

Following the aftermath of the Tlatelolco student massacre, the general public was incredulous that a "civilized" government entrusted to host the Olympic Games could at the same time inflict so much violence onto its people, and maintain an intractable authoritarian position and reject the students' request for a public dialogue.[133] However, Braun asserts, "a deep silence fell over the city."[134] Ten days after the massacre, the XIX Olympic Games went on without delay.

Huerta explains to *Radio Diaries*, "The thing was, the population of Mexico wanted to look the other way. And in a sense that was what happened to [the] Mexican society." [135] Huerta continues, "[Society tried] to erase history. There was a movement,

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129 Bilello, "Mexico."

130 Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil," 448.

131 Ibid., 444.

132 Allier Montaño, "Presentes-Pasados Del 68 Mexicano," 302.

133 Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 532.

134 Ibid.

135 "Mexico,"68."

there was a massacre, and there [will be] a forty-year search for truth." [136] Aguayo reasons, "And that's why we [Mexicans] are still fighting the same battles of 1968." [137]

As for the students, Elisa Ramirez confesses to NPR, "I never went back to the university. I never went back to that group. I completely cut from everything from there on." [138] However, at least six others remained politically active. For example, Pablo Gomez Alvarez, an economy student at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) who was arrested at Tlatelolco on October 2, 1968, and remained in prison until 1971, is now a founding member of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Similarly, Gilberto Guevara Niebla is a member of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE), and Graco Ramírez served as governor of the state of Morelos during the 2012 term—the first leftist governor in the state's history. [139]

Dissecting the movement's impact on Mexico's social-political and civic society, Suckliki's work attests that the massacre was a precursor to several positive civic events:

It incentivized open criticism of the regime and its political system.

It expanded opposition to the system from left and the right.

It enabled the political process to expand to encompass previously excluded groups.

It increased political participation and electoral processes. [140]

In 1971, President Luis Echeverria Alvarez opened dialogue with the middle class, in particular with those Díaz Ordaz had ignored: the intellectuals, the leftists, and the youth.[141] Echeverria freed the students imprisoned in 1968 and got rid of the 145 and 145b articles. Hiriart claims events such as the "end of official censorship of films, the

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Expansion en alianza con CNN, "Seis Líderes Del 68 Que Hoy Hacen Política," *Expansion En Alianza Con CNN*, October 2, 2013, http://expansion.mx/nacional/2013/10/02/pablo-gomez-alvarez.

[140] Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 512. Also expressed in Maria Puga (1986), Hugo Hiriart (1988), Soledad Loeza (1989), and Jaime Suckliki (1996).

[141] Basáñez, *El Pulso de los Sexenios*, 41.

legalization of divorce, a more liberalized dress code, the environmental movement, and a skepticism toward power" all could be traced back to 1968.[142] Loaeza views the aftermath less optimistically and states that "politics remained a family affair among small elites, but a new middle class came into power."[143]

F.   CONCLUSION

Chapter II provided a historical perspective of civic engagement in Mexico during the 1968–1994 period. Further, the chapter established a baseline of civic engagement prior to the emergence of the Internet and subsequent social media platforms that as a whole will answer the broader question of how has social media influenced civic engagement in Mexico.

The first section gave insight into the two primary forces that suppressed civic engagement in Mexico: the Catholic Church and the state. Unmasking the complexities the Spanish colonial legacy and the hegemony of the state, provided context of the repression Mexican society suffered. Hegemony of power and religion, economic suppression, control of information, education imposed during the colonial period continued well into the nineteenth century, keeping Mexico's civil society dormant.

Section two analyzed two crises that led to the emergence of civil society in Mexico: first, the 1968 student movement against oppression from the authoritarian regime and second, the mobilization of the civil society following the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes. Both events highlighted that socioeconomic pressures brought about new actors who were willing civic participants, who made their discontent public, and who pushed democratic ideals forward. Additionally, the response to the earthquakes demonstrated that civil society had the capability to stand autonomous from the state—and could even replace it temporarily.

Finally, the third section evidenced the impact the aforementioned case studies had in the development and engagement of civil society in Mexico. A review of the

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[142] Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 512.

[143] Ibid.

literature revealed that both events ignited significant social and political changes that contributed toward the opening of democracy and social capital of the Mexican society.

Chapter III will analyze the civic engagement from 1994 through today to bring an understanding of how social media further evolved civic engagement in Mexico.

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III. MEXICO'S CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER SOCIAL MEDIA'S INFLUENCE (1994–PRESENT)

Chapter II provided a historical perspective of the emergence of civil society in Mexico from the late sixties until the early nineties—a period right before the Internet revolution. The chapter reviewed two case analyses, fundamental to the awakening of civic society in Mexico: the 1968 student movements and the mobilization following the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes. Both cases exposed the grievances and political opportunities that provoked a historically repressed society to self-organize, mobilize, and collectively find solutions to their pressing problems. The aftermath of these crises gave birth to a myriad of institutional and political reforms and drew the country closer to democratization. Chapter III further analyzes civic engagement since the Internet revolution (1994–present) and maintains the four defining characteristics of civic engagement as: civic awareness, collective identity, collective action, and political action. Lastly, the chapter aims to answer the broader question of how social media networks have driven civic engagement in Mexico.

A. PROFILE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MEXICO

How is life in Mexico now? To answer this question, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) created the Better Life Index, an interactive tool that allows users to rank 11 topics according to their perceived importance.[144] The OECD aims to understand how improving people's well-being could motivate them to volunteer in their communities or take a political stance on an issue. [145] The 2015 Better Life Index indicates that, in the last decade, "Mexico has made tremendous progress … improving the quality of life of its citizens, especially in terms of

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[144] The Better Life Index 11 topics are: housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety, and work-life balance. Further information can be accessed at: http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/about/better-life-initiative/

[145] OECD, "What's the Better Life Index?," *Better Life Index*, accessed June 14, 2016, http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/about/better-life-initiative/#question1.

education, health, and jobs."[146] However, some aspects of life in Mexico still need improvement. For example, daily civic engagement and sense of community are narrowly below the OECD average.[147] The main reasons for the deficient civic engagement ranking follow. First, voter turnout, an objective measure of civic engagement according to the OECD, was 63 percent in comparison to the 72 percent global average.[148] Second, only "77 percent of Mexicans believe that they could rely on someone else beside a family member," where the OECD average is 88 percent.[149] Third, the OECD's subjective measures of civic engagement—trust and perception of absence of corruption—provide insight as to society's underlying and prevalent lack of trust on NGOs, political parties, and the judicial system.[150] Thus, given the opportunity for improving Mexico's life in terms of civic engagement, the question now becomes whether social media can help bridge the gap.

B. SYNOPSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN MEXICO

Mexico, despite being a developing country, uses social media at a higher rate than countries with greater Internet penetration. The Digital in 2016 report, published by the marketing firm We Are Social Singapore, estimates that 47 percent (53.9M people) of Mexico's population has access to the Internet.[151] With an average of 4.6 hours a day spent on the Internet, Mexico is the third most-avid Internet user in Latin America, after Brazil (5.2 hours) and Argentina (4.7 hours).[152] Mexicans' primary access to the Internet

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[146] OECD, "How's Life? Mexico," *Better Life Index*, accessed May 14, 2016, http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/mexico/.

[147] Ibid.

[148] OECD, "How's Life? Mexico," *Better Life Index*, accessed May 14, 2016, http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/mexico/.

[149] Ibid.

[150] OECD, *Measuring Well-Being in Mexican States* (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015), http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264246072-en.

[151] We Are Social Singapore, "Time Spent on the Internet | Digital in 2016," January 2016, fig. 25, http://www.slideshare.net/wearesocialsg/digital-in-2016/25-wearesocialsg_25TIME_SPENT_ON_THE. Further, We Are Social Singapore cites: GlobalWebIndex, Q4 2015. Based on a survey of Internet users aged 16–64 as source of their statistical data.

[152] Ibid., 25.

is done through laptops or desktops (4.6 hours) or through a mobile device (3.4 hours).[153] Finally, We Are Social found that the country's top social media platforms are Facebook (25 percent), and Twitter (16 percent).[154]

Mobile devices, due to their affordability and versatility, are expanding the use of social media in the nation. As of January 2016, 82 percent of the adult population in Mexico owns a mobile device, according to Digital in 2016 report. [155] In the past year, mobile device ownership in the country increased by 4 percent, which, in turn, contributed to the nation's 1 percent increase in Internet access and the 7 percent increase in social media access. For people like Guilherme Ribenboim, Twitter's[156] vice president for Latin America, the importance of mobile devices in the country is evident; he asserts that 78 percent of Mexican users access Twitter through their phones.[157] Given the increased market competition among telecommunication companies, and with increased infrastructure developments and initiatives, such as the United Nation (UN) goal to increase Internet penetration, affordability, and reliability in developing countries by 2020, mobile devices are expected to continue to increase access to social media in Mexico. [158]

So, what exactly are social media networks? Wasserman and Faust define a social network as "a finite set or sets of actors and the relation of relations defined on them."[159]

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[153] Ibid.

[154] We Are Social Singapore, "Top Active Social Platforms | Digital in 2016," January 2016, fig. 288, http://www.slideshare.net/wearesocialsg/digital-in-2016/288. Further, We Are Social Singapore cites: GlobalWebIndex, Q4 2015. Based on a survey of Internet users aged 16–64 as source of their statistical data. We Are Social Singapore also notes that the date has been rebased to show national penetration.

[155] We Are Social Singapore, "Time Spent on the Internet | Digital in 2016," fig. 25.

[156] Twitter is a microblog platform that allows users to send messages, with a maximum length of 140 characters, called tweets. The tweets can be labeled by preceding the message with the # symbol (called a hashtag). The hashtag allows a user to search and find all the conversations categorized under that particular hashtag.

[157] NOTIMEX, "Cada Vez Más Mexicanos Usan Twitter," *Excélsior*, March 16, 2016, http://www.excelsior.com.mx/hacker/2016/03/16/1081365.

[158] United Nations, "Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: Goal 9," *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*, accessed May 25, 2016, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg9.

[159] Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis Methods and Applications* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815478.

The authors also define an actor or "node" as a "discrete individual, corporate, or collective social units."[160] For example, an actor can be a Naval Postgraduate School student, a nongovernmental organization (NGO), a banking corporation, or a Native American. The relationship or "lines" between the networks and the actors are "a collection of ties of a specific kind among members of a group."[161] The relationships between group members include key information about the actors that define features of the social network itself.

Social media platforms can be used for social or recreational purposes, but, often, also to keep up with news or topics of interest. Twitter's benefit comes from the "trifecta" power that it gives to the people; for example, when actors send a tweet, Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García state: "they are protagonists, consumers, and generators of information and content all at once."[162] Mexico's government officials have also recognized the power of social media. @PresidenciaMex is "the most active of all world leaders' accounts with an average of 68 tweets per day," per Twinplomacy data.[163] Likewise, the same report cited @EPN, President Enrique Peña Nieto's account, as "the most followed Latin American leader and the ninth most followed worldwide."[164] Mexico's president uses his Twitter account to promote official initiatives such as #PactoporMexico,[165] #WEF (Word Economic Forum) or energy reform, #ReformaEnergetica.[166]

Mexico's considerable wealth disparity, "the top 20 percent of the population earn more than thirteen times as much as the bottom 20 percent," per OECD How's Life? Mexico report,[167] raises the concern that the Internet, as a perceived non-essential

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[160] Ibid., 17.

[161] Ibid., 20.

[162] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1704.

[163] "Mexico | Twiplomacy," accessed April 24, 2016, http://twiplomacy.com/info/north-america/mexico/.

[164] Ibid.

[165] This pact that proposes reforms of the financial, education, and telecommunication sectors

[166] "Mexico | Twiplomacy."

[167] OECD, "How's Life? Mexico."

commodity, may only be accessible by the middle and upper classes. This perception further segregates the low income population. Other factors that can widen the digital divide are as follows:

1. A failing infrastructure that could make Internet physically inaccessible to remote regions of the country. For example, according to the OECD, broadband connections in Mexico range from 55.1 percent in Nuevo Leon (the second largest city in the nation) to only 9.5 percent in Chiapas (a southern economically deprived state).[168]

2. The generational gap. Presumably the older generation may not consume as much social media as millennials.

3. A lack technological know-how.

4. User apathy toward technology.

Thus, although a digital divide exists in Mexico, analyses appear to indicate that socio-economic, infrastructure, or generational factors are driving the digital separation and not lack of public interest.

Despite its popularity, the use of social media in Mexico can also be a dangerous activity for its users, particularly for activists. In 2015, Freedom House[169] rated Mexico as a "partially free" country in terms of access to the Internet and as "not free" with regards to freedom of the press.[170] The organization cited user rights violations, access restrictions, limits on content, and arrest of bloggers and Internet users as contributing factors for the rating.[171] Additionally, the report finds that media reporters, citizen journalists, and cyber activists face the greatest threats. Freedom House lists cyberattacks, harassment, and physical violence as the reasons Mexico is considered "one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists and media workers."[172] Notwithstanding,

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[168] OECD, "How's Life in Mexico?," October 2015, 5, http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Better%20Life%20Initiative%20country%20note%20Mexico.pdf.

[169] Headquartered in Washington, D.C., Freedom House is a nongovernmental organization that conducts research and advocates for democracy, political freedom, and human rights.

[170] Freedom House, "Mexico | Country Report | Freedom on the Net | 2015," *Freedom House*, accessed April 24, 2016, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/mexico.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

Freedom House asserts that Mexican citizens continue to utilize social media for everyday activism, such as: "warn[ing] local communities about dangerous cartel-related situations or report[ing] instances of corruption and violence." [173] Thus, social media provides an outlet for civic engagement that citizens are willing to leverage despite the potential risks.

C.   CIVIC AWARENESS

How can social media drive civic awareness in Mexico? Freedman and colleagues argue that a functioning liberal democracy carries "the assumption that there will be sufficient, relevant data available in the political environment and those citizens will be able and inclined to draw on this information in making their choices." [174] Moreover, the authors emphasize that significant effort should be made to reach those citizens with the least amount of political information.[175] Understanding the role social media networks play in increasing Mexican citizens' awareness of civic related information—for example, upcoming elections, socio-political events, protests—can provide insight on ways to increase voter participation or improve overall citizenry in the country.[176]

In 2009, a group of intellectuals, businessmen, and students initiated an *anulista* (vote nulling) movement via Twitter. This movement asked citizens to cast null ballots as a sign of protest against the political system and eventually push for electoral reform. [177] The movement requested three things: (1) the registration of independent candidates, (2) electoral referendum, and (3) revocable mandate.[178] As a result, the 2009 elections

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Paul Freedman, Michael Franz, and Kenneth Goldstein, "Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (October 1, 2004): 723, doi:10.1111/j.0092–5853.2004.00098.x.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ivonne Lara, "Voto Nulo En México, El Debate Y Sus Propuestas," *Hipertextual*, June 4, 2015, http://hipertextual.com/2015/06/voto-nulo-en-mexico.

[178] Ibid.

recorded an increase in the number of null votes nationwide and an estimated 10.86 percent in Mexico City alone, making it the third-largest portion of the vote.[179]

One of the anulistas' granted requests asked for independent candidates to be given the opportunity to register. Nevertheless, Denise Dresser, a leader of the 2009 anulista movement expressed, "the electoral system works very well for parties, but very poorly for citizens."[180] Although voters will be able to choose independent candidates, Dresser maintains that the "registration is complicated, bureaucratic, and full of endless requirements."[181] Despite several issues, experts considered the anulista movement a success because, after the 2009 elections, then-president Felipe Calderón called for a dialogue and, along with the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), outlined the electoral reform of 2014.

During a counter movement emerged called #NoTeAnules (#DoNotNull), the campaign asked for citizens to participate (#Participa) and to vote (#Vota).[182] The activists Juan Cesar, head of the Monitoring and Analysis Office at the National Electoral Institute, and Roberto Duque Roquero, an electoral law professor at UNAM, confronted the anulistas head-on. The activists sought to inform the public that: "the null vote, or absenteeism, only helps those parties that have already hurt the country so much." [183] On May 7, 2015, Roquero published the video "La Realidad del Voto Nulo / #NoTeAnules"[184] (The Reality of a Null Vote /#DoNotNull) on YouTube. The video provided answers citizens needed to know to make an informed electoral decision: "Where does your null vote go? What is it for? What will they do with it? Know the amazing effects of invalid ballots in Mexico—."[185] According to its footnotes, the video

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] La Realidad en el Mundo, "Ahí Su Respuesta, Porque Siempre Gana El PRI," *Facebook*, May 8, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/211586975686739/videos/440013752844059/?type=1&theater.

[184] Voto en blanco MX, *La Realidad Del Voto Nulo / #NoTeAnules / Roberto Duque Roquero*, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CUmtkpq0Dc&feature=youtu.be.

[185] Lara, "Voto Nulo En México, El Debate Y Sus Propuestas."

reached 10.7 million registered views in one month span.[186] Thus, social media platforms have the capacity of providing pertinent civic-related information, increasing awareness and making politically salient Mexican society.

D.   COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

How can social media networks drive collective identity in Mexico? Friedman and McAdam define collective identity as "a public pronouncement of status."[187] The act can be thought of a "claim for oneself [of] a desired social attachment and a new sense of identity."[188] In the context of social movement, Friedman and McAdam reference Melucci and contend that admitting to being a member of a real or "imagined" community can be motivation enough for action.[189] Analyzing how social media is fostering a sense of community and collective identity in Mexico may bring us closer to answering one important question. Is social media affecting civic engagement in Mexico?

According to the 2016 Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) initial conclusions of the disappearances and homicides of the *normalistas*[190] from Ayotzinapa report, on September 26 and September 27, 2014, meant that around 180 people, 100 of them students, "were direct victims of various human rights violations."[191] The students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Techers College in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero traveled in three buses to the nearby town of Iguala. It was customary practice for the students to take buses from the Ayotzinapa's central bus station for transport to fundraisers and other events. The students would typically return the buses without much problem at the end of their trip.

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[186] Voto en blanco MX, *La Realidad Del Voto Nulo / #NoTeAnules / Roberto Duque Roquero*.

[187] Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices, and the Life of a Social Movement," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon D. Morris and Mueller McClurg Carol (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 157.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Normalistas are teacher trainers.

[191] Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), "Ayotzinapa Report: Research and Initial Conclusions of the Disappearances and Homicides of the Normalistas from Ayotzinapa," Executive Summary, (April 2016), 7, http://media.wix.com/ugd/3a9f6f_e1df5a84680a4a8a969bd45453da1e31.pdf.

On this particular instance, the students wanted to fundraise to attend a march in Mexico City, in remembrance of the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre. At around 9:00 pm, September 26, 2014, the municipal police commandeered one of the buses.[192] Other policemen arrested some of the students at a plaza and opened fire. According to the GIEI Ayotzinapa Report, the military and federal police participated in the extrajudicial execution of six people, the killing of three bystanders, the wounding of over 40 people, the persecution of 80 people, and the enforced disappearance of 43 students. Finally, 30 people survived attempted killings.[193] To date, the missing Ayotzinapa students have not been found nor have the killers paid for their crimes.

An outraged Mexican society turned to the streets and to Twitter to voice their disgust at the heinous act. The event sparked what McAdam calls a "cognitive liberation"—meaning the people collectively accepted the problem as their own.[194] The first primary hashtag associated with the movement was: #AyotzinapaSomosTodos, (#WeAreAll Ayotzinapa). The people demanded: "They took them alive, we want them back alive."[195] The second hashtag, #Yamecansé (I am tired) became the national trending topic on November 8, 2014, as Twitter users demanded that Jesus Murillo Karma, Mexico's attorney general, presented a legitimate investigative report about the students' disappearance—the hashtag was a global trending topic for 3 hours.[196] The third hashtag #DiaDeLaIndignacion (Day of Indignation) came at the one year anniversary of the students' forced disappearance. In addition to becoming Mexico's number one trending subject, the hashtag became a global trending topic.[197]

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[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid., 7–8.

[194] Doug McAdam, "Cognitive Liberation," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013), 2, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm030/abstract.

[195] Expansión en alianza con CNN, "De Ayotzinapa Al #YaMeCanse2, Los 'Trendings' Del Caso de Los Normalistas," Tecnología, *Expansión En Alianza Con CNN*, (December 7, 2014), http://expansion.mx/tecnologia/2014/12/07/de-ayotzinapa-al-yamecanse2-los-trendings-del-caso-de-los-normalistas.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Maria Luisa Vivas, "#DiaDeLaIndignacion Impacta En Redes Sociales Y Es 'Trending Topic' Mundial," Nacional, *Proceso.com.mx*, (September 26, 2015), http://www.proceso.com.mx/416516/diadelaindignacion-se-convierte-en-trending-topic-mundial.

The severity of authoritarianism, violence, corruption, and impunity surrounding Ayotzinapa sparked a global outrage that echoed the frustration felt throughout Mexico. For example, in Bolivia, Eva Liz Morales, President Evo Morales' daughter, led a demonstration in front of the Mexican Embassy in La Paz. In Guatemala, the Mesoamerican Congress sent a message demanding justice resolution. In Madrid, Spain, 50 people showed up at Mexico's Embassy with banners, candles, and pictures of the victims. Similarly, the Mexican community of students and academics at the University of Cambridge, in England, marched to demand justice and punishment for those responsible.[198] Thus, through the power of social media, a local collective identity quickly transcended scale into a global sentiment. In a sense, the hashtags, pictures, and posts became the digital declaration of McAdam's "public pronouncement" of identification. In other words, social media allowed sympathizers from all over the world to declare that they, too, formed part of the community of Ayotzinapa—even if only temporarily.

E.   COLLECTIVE ACTION

What is social media's importance in terms of collective action? Postmes and Brusting contend that the power of social media stems from its ability "to 'open up new avenues' and 'reinforce existing forms of activism.'"[199] Understanding how social media drives collective action can prove helpful in increasing volunteer participation rates, invigorating club membership, and increasing social capital as a whole.

A visit to Mexico government's official website (gob.mx) shows the state's effort to become a one-stop portal for citizens. Although the website is still under development, the government's aim for the tool is to "reduce barriers that impede query, participation, and public collaboration."[200] Furthermore, the government believes the online tool will "generate new opportunities for integration of actors into the public political process and

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[198] Ibid.

[199] Tom Postmes and Suzanne Brunsting, "Collective Action in the Age of the Internet Mass Communication and Online Mobilization," *Social Science Computer Review* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 2002): 294, doi:10.1177/089443930202000306.

[200] gob.mx, "Gob.mx/consulta - Acerca de," accessed May 26, 2016, http://www.gob.mx/consulta/about.

a space to build communities around topics of public interest."[201] The thesis infers, then, that the Mexican government has confidence that an interactive online tool can augment or drive the collective participation and civic engagement of its citizens.

The Twitter movement against tax increase on the Internet, recorded under the hashtag #InternetNecesario (Indispensable Internet) exemplifies the effective use of social media for collective action in Mexico. In 2009, following Congress's proposal of a 3 percent tax increase in telecommunications, several public and private actors quickly rose to manifest their opposition.[202] Key opponents of the tax, such as President of ISOC Mexico, Dr. Alejandro Pisanty, and Twitter Mexico, saw the government's sumptuary treatment of the Internet as a reproachable act.[203] Private corporations and users saw having access to the Internet as a necessity rather than a luxury.

Through online collective action, ISOC Mexico built a Twitter campaign with the message: "Promote, not Tax."[204] Under the hashtag #InternetNecesario, ISOC Mexico asked all affected sectors of society to support the creation of public policy, "and instead of disrupting service, the movement boosted the expansion of telecommunications,"[205] said Pisanty. At movement's peak, #InternetNecesario became a national trending topic and the fifth most-active topic.[206] On October 22, 2009, the Twitter community, along with Mexicana de Internet (AMIPICI), Nacional de Telecommunications (ANATEL), and Senators Francisco Castellón Fonseca, Dante Delgado, and Carlos Sotelo, gathered at the nation's Senate to discuss the activists concerns.[207] The following week, on October

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1704.

[203] Leon Felipe Sanchez, "#InternetNecesario ¿El poder a la gente?," Opinion, *Expansion en alianza con CNN*, (October 23, 2009), http://expansion.mx/opinion/2009/10/22/internetnecesario-el-poder-a-la-gente.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Raul Luna, "#InternetNecesario llega al Senado," Nomada Digital Social Media, *Conversaciones*, (October 22, 2009), http://www.nomadadigital.net/conversaciones/internetnecesario-lleva-exigencia-contra-impuesto-a-telecomunicaciones-hasta-el-senado/.

[206] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1704.

[207] Sánchez, "#InternetNecesario ¿El poder a la gente?"

27, 2009, activists in different states of the country protested out on the streets.[208] The official rejection of the Internet tax came a week later.[209]

Critics define the movement as only partially successful because telephone, satellite, and cable television sectors were not spared from taxation. [210] However, the movement proved successful in terms of collective action driven by social media networks. As Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García point out, "InternetNecesario has pointed new directions of citizen participation through a virtual space based on social media with free speech, easy access, instant updates, and no restrictions."[211]

People participating in Mexico's Twitter community accomplished what the victims of the Tlatelolco student massacre will never again have the chance to do: be heard by lawmakers.

F.   POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The last aspect of civic engagement left for examination is the manner in which social media platforms have invigorated political activism in Mexico. Ekman and Amnå define political participation as "those legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions that they take."[212] Understanding how social media drives political action in Mexico can provide insight as to how activists, politicians, and everyday actors can increase voter turnout, increase trust in government, and lessen the perception of corruption of political institutions.[213]

The OECD 2015 Better Life Index asserts that "voter participation is the best existing means of measuring civic and political engagement for two reasons: high quality

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[208] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media."

[209] Luna, "#InternetNecesario llega al Senado." Also expressed in Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1704.

[210] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1704.

[211] Ibid., 1710.

[212] Joakim Ekman and Erik Amnå, "Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology," *Human Affairs* 22, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 193, doi:10.2478/s13374–012–0024–1.

[213] OECD, "OECD Better Life Index | Civic Engagement," *OECD Better Life Index*, accessed May 25, 2016, http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/civic-engagement/.

data and broad cross-country comparability."[214] Specific to Mexico, the 2015 Index found that, "voter turnout … was 63 percent during recent elections, lower than the OECD average of 68 percent."[215] However, despite the 5 percent decrease in voter turnout, Mexico's top 20 percent of the population votes at approximately the same rate as the lower 20 percent of the population, suggesting that Mexico's democratic institutions are effective at including all citizens.[216]

During the last decade, the Internet evolution has impacted the political scene in Mexico, particularly the way political campaigns are conducted. In 2006, a few candidates started campaigning via blogs. In 2009, political parties began leveraging YouTube and Facebook. Around 2012, Twitter emerged with movements such as #YoSoy132 (#Iam132)–a Twitter movement that arose after Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto failed to acknowledge the students' protests following the President's lecture at a private university.[217] By 2015, less than a decade after political campaign use of technology began, political campaigns successfully leveraged the entire breadth of digital platforms.[218]

A review of the political campaigns of Jaime Rodríguez Calderón and Pedro Kumamoto Aguilar reveals that their clever use of social media platforms increased voter turnout in their states, gave them a political edge, led to their perspective elections, and resulted in historical political outcomes for Mexico.

In 2015, agricultural engineer Jaime Rodríguez Calderón ("El Bronco") made history when he became Mexico's first Independent governor.[219] Miguel Davila, coordinator of El Bronco's social networking strategy, explains that the campaign team

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[214] Ibid.

[215] OECD, "How's Life? Mexico."

[216]Ibid.

[217] Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1708.

[218] Forbes Staff, "¿Las Redes Sociales Ya Demostraron Su Poder?," *Forbes México*, July 30, 2015, http://www.forbes.com.mx/las-redes-sociales-ya-demostraron-su-poder/.

[219] Univisión, "El Bronco Hace Historia Y Se Convierte En El Primer Gobernador Independiente de México," *Univisión Noticias*, June 7, 2015, http://www.univision.com/noticias/noticias-de-mexico/el-bronco-hace-historia-y-se-convierte-en-el-primer-gobernador-independiente-de-mexico.

started a year-and-a-half early, contacting every user who commented on the Bronco's Facebook profile. Davila's intent was to transfer the digital followership to the streets.[220]

Likewise, Pedro Kumamoto Aguilar ("Kuma") also became the first independent candidate to win a seat at the Congress in Jalisco—the second-largest state in Mexico.[221] Kuma hired a young team to devise a comprehensive digital campaign. Susana Ochoa, a 24-year-old communications graduate from the Technology Institute of Monterrey and director of the campaign, explains: "There was a unique niche, [we saw] an opportunity in every digital space and we leveraged it."[222] Ochoa elaborates that the campaign marketing team used Twitter for immediate question and answer user feedback. Facebook became a dashboard, which, along with the Kuma's website, enabled the team to post and promote the campaign's commitments, prior to Kuma's visit to a town. Additionally, Ochoa highlights the importance of Periscope[223] in the campaign: "it allowed us to be in the moment, live, connected with people."[224] Finally, the team posted action pictures on Instagram.[225]

However, skeptics such as Maria Elena Meneses—a media, Internet, and digital culture researcher at Technology Institute of Monterrey—hesitate to credit social media as a driver of concrete impact on the polls. Meneses contends that it takes more than Facebook likes to make voters go to the polls. "It is nonsense to say that [El] Bronco won the elections thanks to Facebook."[226] Meneses argues that El Bronco's victory in Nuevo Leon or Pedro Kumamoto's in Jalisco are the results of the three factors: "1) lack of credibility of the other political parties, 2) their opponents' poor performance, and 3) the

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[220] Staff, "¿Las Redes Sociales Ya Demostraron Su Poder?"

[221] Univison, "El Bronco Hace Historia Y Se Convierte En El Primer Gobernador Independiente de México," *Univision Noticias*, June 7, 2015, http://www.univision.com/noticias/noticias-de-mexico/el-bronco-hace-historia-y-se-convierte-en-el-primer-gobernador-independiente-de-mexico.

[222] Ibid.

[223] A web application that allows broadcasting of live events to the masses.

[224] Staff, "¿Las Redes Sociales Ya Demostraron Su Poder?"

[225] Instagram is a web application that allows users to share their lives' events through pictures. Instagram.com/about/faq/ expresses that the company envisions "a world more connected through photos."

[226] Staff, "¿Las Redes Sociales Ya Demostraron Su Poder?"

citizens' leap of faith on independent candidates."[227] While Meneses' assertions may also have factored in the electoral success, El Bronco's and Kumamoto's use of social media for political activism is nonetheless indisputable. As Univision and Parametría[228] analysts concur, the use of social media for political campaigning may be indicative of future trends in the country and may play a role in the 2018 presidential dispute.[229]

G.   CONCLUSION

Chapter III asked how social media influenced civic engagement in modern Mexico. To derive the answer, the chapter analyzed civic engagement in terms of four previously defined characteristics: civic awareness, collective identity, collective action, and political activism. Additionally, the chapter provided a specific case analysis in which social media influenced each of the civic engagement characteristics.

Mexico's society is a voracious consumer of social media. Mexicans use Facebook and Twitter to foster social relationships as well as to keep up with news or political matters. In terms of civic engagement, Twitter's ease of use and quick multiplicity power, make the microblog a go-to choice for cyberactivists.

The civic awareness section found social media networks to be an effective tool for government officials to disseminate pertinent civic information to the population. As the Twitter movement #NoteAnules proved, informative messages and videos can be quickly disseminated and digested by the masses via social media platforms. At a basic level, civic awareness is important in that people are less likely to volunteer, vote, or protest, if they are unaware of ongoing issues in their community.

The collective identity section found hashtags and tweets to be a symbolic proclamation of identification with an event. The movement #AyotzinapaSomosTodos

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[227] Ibid.

[228] According to their "About" page, Parametría is "a company dedicated to the strategic research of opinion and analysis of the results." The company claims "information generated by Parametría has been crucial in the scheme of effective communication campaigns and project design with public impact." Further information can be accessed at: http://www.parametria.com.mx/somos.php

[229] Univisión, "El Bronco Hace Historia Y Se Convierte En El Primer Gobernador Independiente de México."

following the forced disappearance of 43 students in the southern state of Guerrero, drove such public indignation that sympathizers around the globe felt compelled to post their collective dissent online; thus, giving them a sense of shared community.

The collective action section covered the movement #InternetNecessario. This Twitter movement, highlighted the ways activists are collaborating and taking collective action for the overall benefit of society. Mexico's Twitter community advocated to Mexico's congress that the Internet, as a necessity, should be made accessible to the masses. The movement drove the successful rejection of a 3 percent tax increase on the Internet.

The political activism section analyzed the case of two independent politicians whose robust digital marketing campaign gave them an edge at the ballots, lead them to their victory, and drove historic political results for Mexico.

Chapter IV will contrast civic engagement pre-Internet revolution (1968–1993) in comparison to civic engagement post-Internet revolution (1994–present). Chapter IV, then, will further examine how social media affects civic engagement in Mexico.

IV.   THE ENGAGED E-CITIZEN?

Chapter III examined social media's overall impact on Mexican citizens, contrasting the decades since the Internet age with the repression by both Church and state, as examined in historical analysis in Chapter II. As Loaeza argues, Mexican society realized that "not participating brought that much more instability,"[230] and, once the masses began voicing their dissents, they grew ever more accustomed to demanding that the state meet its social contract obligations. Chapter III continued examining civic engagement in Mexico after the Internet revolution, and found that Mexico's cyber activists, citizens, and politicians have embraced and leveraged Facebook and Twitter for civic engagement. A number of Twitter online movements have had an impact on civic awareness, collective identity, collective action, and political activism, all important characteristic for a well-balanced citizenry.

Chapter IV brings the analyses together to illustrate and answer the thesis's core question of whether social media has transformed civic engagement in Mexico. In short, the answer is predominantly, "yes." Specifically, social media's impact in Mexico has been most significant in terms of civic awareness, somewhat significant in terms of collective action and political activism, and either symbolic or still forthcoming in terms of collective identity. Initially, the thesis theorized that: 1) social media could transform civic engagement in Mexico by opening new nodes for active civic participation, or that 2) social media failed to entice more civic engagement in Mexico than in previous time in the nation's history. The answer, as Chapter IV reveals, is not binary. Social media has revitalized civic engagement in Mexico, but its impact on society has been transformative in making more citizens aware of pertinent civic information, fostering some collective action and political activism, while merely symbolic as far as at instilling a national collective identity.

Chapter IV, then, contends that social media has transformed civic engagement in Mexico through the following four arguments: 1) social media has increased civic

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[230] Soledad Loaeza, "México 1968: Los Orígenes de La Transición," *Foro Internacional* 30, no. 1 (117) (1989): 71.

awareness, 2) social media has expanded collective action in Mexico, 3) social media has strengthened political activism in Mexico, and 4) social media has not significantly transformed, but could lessen, collective identity. The next four sections will develop the aforementioned arguments by comparing the time frames before and after the Internet revolution.

A.   EXPANSION OF CIVIC AWARENESS

Mexican citizens are more civically aware today than they were prior to the Internet revolution. Specifically, social media networks have provided a platform for the state, citizens, activists, and traditional media channels to leverage the expediency, ease, and multiplicity factors of these mediums.

Prior to the Internet revolution, the state's stronghold on its citizens significantly limited people's ability to acquire civic information. In the 1960s accounts of Tlatelolco revealed in Chapter II, leftist information spread covertly, movements originated at the grassroots levels, and charismatic leaders broadcasted information primarily at a local level. Furthermore, citizens had limited choices in the print and broadcast news sources they consumed, and, since the state controlled a great portion of media networks, the state often set the agenda for the information produced. As Bilello illustrates, journalists sought opportunities to voice criticism but, in one instance, the national liberal newspaper, the *Excelsior* criticized the regime a bit too strongly. Then-president Echeverria overthrew the newspaper's executives, including renowned journalist Julio Scherer Garcia.[231]

Today, social media has broadened the sources and access points from which Mexicans receive political and civic news pertinent to them. First, citizens can gather civic information from the state's official websites and social media pages. The state's embrace of social media networks makes a "virtual" dialogue between the state and its citizens more plausible than in decades past. In the Tlatelolco days, the state refused to "reach down"[232] to the students, and, in 1985, the state abandoned its citizens; today, the

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[231] Bilello, "Mexico," 83.

[232] Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 549.

state's attempt—although a small step—to be more accessible to the masses and provide access to services and information alludes to a change from the top.

Second, citizens themselves are taking an active role in leveraging social media networks to inform the greater community. As noted in Chapter III, the abundance of digital devices, in particular mobile phones, has caused the consumption of information through social networks to skyrocket. Furthermore, devices with embedded cameras have incentivized ordinary people to act as "citizen journalists," providing near real-time "coverage" of an event and, sometimes more quickly than traditional media can, the first "eyewitness accounts" of a story. In minutes, if not seconds, a video can be uploaded, broadcasted, and replicated through Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube; within a mere few hours it can become a trending topic at a multi-level stage.

Third, activists in Mexico have leveraged the "ubiquity, anonymity, and time"[233] of Facebook and Twitter to deploy a marketing campaign for a protest or social movement.

Fourth, traditional media has also moved online, and most of national and international headlines can be easily accessible to citizens from their newsfeeds social media.

Despite the aforementioned evidence attesting to the civic awareness social media networks have provided the Mexican people, some critics, found in the literature review, would argue that social media also creates a digital divide. As Chapter III attested, only 43 percent of Mexico's population has direct access to the Internet. Additionally, as of 2015, Freedom of House still rates Mexico as a "partially free" country in terms of access to the Internet and as "not free" in terms of freedom of the media, indicating that information does not reach homogenously to all sectors of the country and that media scrutiny still restricts the free flow of information in Mexico. Yes, those are still valid arguments; however, new and traditional media expose ordinary citizens to more information now than prior to the Internet. The 1994 Zapatista movement, discussed at greater extent in the political activism section of this chapter, further provides evidence

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[233] Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 1707.

that indigenous groups, even as socio-economically and technologically disadvantaged sector of society have leveraged the Internet to inform and recruit sympathizers as well as engage politically.

B.   TOKEN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Social media networks have not significantly fostered a more unified collective identity of the Mexican population in comparison to pre-Internet era. In spite—or because—of the oppression suffered from the Spanish conquistadors, the patriarchal state and the Church, the Mexican people has maintained a strong sense of collective identity throughout their history.[234] Putnam argues that "the act of collective protest itself creates enduring bonds of solidarity."[235] For Mexico, then, the formative and collective struggle the pueblo endured to emerge as an autonomous civil society forged a sense of nationalism and collective unity that social media communities have not yet been able to replicate.

The subjective nature of identity makes it hard to determine with objectivity whether an individual indeed identifies, empathizes, or proclaims allegiance with a cause. One way to gauge the strength of identification is whether it leads to action. Given the scope of this research, this section will be limited to review the literature and first-source accounts and perceptions of the Tlatelolco and Mexico City earthquakes events and will provide a general consensus as to whether 1) the student-activists portrayed signs of collective identity and 2) the general public not only supported or sympathized with the movements but also took action. The review will be compared to current cultural literature to determine whether social media has influenced identity strongly enough to lead to action.

As Chapter II analyzed, the 1968 Tlatelolco student movement provides insight of the perceived high sense of collective identity and nationalism Mexicans exhibited throughout the movement and after the massacre. As the student-activists began assembling their meetings, a sense of solidarity, *patria* (nation), and community

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[234] Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*, 72.

[235] Putnam, "Bowling Alone," 153.

surrounded the campus. The sentiment spread organically at their public protests, and can be described asy "a mass outpouring from below of nationalistic feelings which seemed to unite all Mexicans in a common bond,"[236] Braun explains. The city also portrayed a public proclamation of its Revolutionary heritage. Images of Mexican Revolution and Independence heroes—Hidalgo, Juarez, Zapata and Morelos—took center stage as symbolic leadership of the movement, replacing the images of Marxist and communists figures such as, Mao, Marx, Che.[237] The city had a public identification with the movement, some of protesters felt as "real Mexicans;"[238] others sang: "the National Anthem united all those who were present with the cause,"[239] claims Braun.

The public's support went beyond showing sentiments of identification, which as the literature review exposed in Chapter I, critics, may catalog as token activism or slacktivism. The movement encompassed more than UNAM and Polytechnic Institute students: professors, secretaries, laborers, bus drivers, entire families would take to the streets, and provided basic food and shelter for the students to continue their work.

Similarly, analysis of the mobilization following the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes provides insight into the overwhelming collective solidarity and support that Mexico, as a whole community, felt for the victims. Leal Martinez analyzed the journals published after the tragic earthquakes to understand two moments in the mobilization: 1) a moment of mass solidarity—when the people mobilized organically, 2) victims' unification—when then victims collectively made their demands.[240] The national newspapers begin reporting on the mass solidarity of the *pueblo* that encompasses "all the Mexican people."[241]

On September 23, 1985, Sergio Aguayo for *La Jornada* newspaper wrote:

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[236] Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 526.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Ibid., 543.

[239] Ibid., 526.

[240] Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil," 445.

[241] Ibid., 451.

In face of tragedies, such as the one we are living, solidarity and generosity from *el pueblo* are indispensable and comforting.[242]

On September 21, 1985, Laura Bolaños for *El Universal* newspaper wrote:

Only those that do not know *el pueblo* would be surprised at its great capacity for solidarity. After all, revolutions are an act of solidarity, and we have undergone three intense ones.[243]

Similarly, Bilello, "the sense of community that many Mexicans had lost in the migration from the countryside to big cities was awakened as numerous neighborhood associations were formed."[244] Thus, as presented, the sense of collective identification and followed action are, in great part, the product of historical stressors that the Mexican people has had to overcome.

Today, the ubiquitous nature of social media coupled with an ever more globalized society, have the potential to trade a nationalistic identity for a more universal persona. The threat exists that globalization and immediate information exchange could weaken the Mexican collective identity. As Anthropologist Arizpe asserts, "Today, the question that Mexicans in the cultural field ponder about is whether we will be able to sustain the high level of cultural advancement Mexico had during the last century, as it faces a now globalized world."[245] Further, Arizpe questions whether the collective identity, solidarity and sociability displayed in the 1968 and 1985 crises will dissipate as society becomes even more cyber oriented.

Will the strong sociability of the Mexican culture be poured into cyber networks? Or is another type of communication emerging, for some moving at extremely fast pace; for others, trivial? The fact that children are growing shaped by images and messages from mobile phones, Facebook, Twitter, it is a hopeful, yet dark and menacing cyber universe.[246]

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[242] Ibid.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Bilello, "Mexico," 85.

[245] Lourdes Arizpe, "Cultura E Identidad. Mexicanos En La Era Global," *Revista de La Universidad de Mexico*, Nueva Epoca, no. 92 (October 2011): 81.

[246] Ibid., 80–81.

Arizpe argues, "Mexican tradition of community runs so deep that unites us in those times we face dangers, it is necessary to defend it with all of our might … In the cosmopolitan world in which we now live, there will be no sustainability without coexistence."[247] As such, social media has not significantly transformed collective identity in Mexico, but could potentially lessen it.

C.   EXPANDED COLLECTIVE ACTION

Social media has opened up space for collective action in Mexico. As discussed in Chapter I, the literature review regarding the effect social media has in collective action holds several contention points, specifically what is action versus pseudo-action. One side of the argument holds that individual participation, such as volunteering or joining a local organization, matters as it can lead to an increased level of social capital.[248] The counter argument holds that whether the individual participates online or offline is irrelevant, as long as the participation leads to a concrete action.[249] Participation via social media communities, critics argue, is problematic because often there is no concrete action behind the participation—"liking" or "retweeting" about an issue not enough. In a traditional organization, the leadership can implement an accountability method that discerns active from inactive or non-producing members. The anonymity and distance constraints of a social media environment, critics argue, can easily prove difficult for leaders to gauge their members' level of commitment, motivate them to produce, or hold them accountable.[250] Unfortunately, Mexico's online communities are not exempt from the activism versus slacktivism dilemma.

Additionally, contention exists as to what level of collective action is deeming valuable. Social moment theorists highlight deliberate protests' agendas such as

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[247] Ibid., 79.

[248] Putnam, "Bowling Alone," 66.

[249] Robert J. Sampson et al., "Civil Society Reconsidered: The Durable Nature and Community Structure of Collective Civic Action," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 3 (November 1, 2005): 674, doi:10.1086/497351.

[250] Jeroen Van Laer, "Activists Online and Offline: The Internet as an Information Channel for Protest Demonstrations," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 348–49, doi:10.17813/maiq.15.3.8028585100245801.

indigenous movements, women's rights, immigration reform movements as valuable, whereas other sociologists concentrate on the concept of "collective civic action."[251] Does it take a national crisis of the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes magnitude to bring the level of collective action and self-organization that transcends time? Sampson et al. warn about glorifying "trending" online movements as the only significant measures of collective civic action. The authors argue that thousands of collective action events— such as fundraising events, clean up drives, and volunteering at local animal shelter— emerge organically throughout local communities, and the lack of online exposure does not lessen the events' importance. Sampson et al. attest, "whether the goals are primarily local, citywide, national, or even international is less relevant to us than the local time, energy, and effort that must be expended in organizing and carrying out the event."[252] However, the problem with such "ordinary" tasks, the authors argue, is that they do not shock the system. [253] Faced with the aforementioned conundrum, the thesis's approach then is to measure collective civic action as both ordinary civic action and explicit protest action.[254]

In Mexico, Serna explains, volunteer action was a predominantly female driven activity until the end of the 1960s, at which time a number of new forms of leftist and secular organizations emerged.[255] Well-to-do women donated their time primarily to charity-related or missionary work tied to religious organizations and the Catholic Church.[256] The late 1960s saw a number of male leaders arise and actively participate, establishing organizations for the development of the community and answering social and political deficiencies;[257] but, the organizations failed to develop due to lack of sustainable funding. The bulk of the volunteer action and the growth of the social

[251] Sampson et al., "Civil Society Reconsidered," 676–77.

[252] Ibid., 702.

[253] Ibid., 676.

[254] Ibid., 676–77.

[255] María Guadalupe Serna, "La Diversidad Y El Contexto Cambiante Del Voluntariado En México," *Espiral (Guadalajara)* 16, no. 47 (2010): 154–60.

[256] Ibid., 142.

[257] Ibid., 157–60.

organizations in Mexico took place in the1980s as the economic recession and the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes awoke society to work together or along with the government to begin the reconstruction of the city.[258] The 1980s also saw a rise in organizations and collective civic action dedicated to the care of preventative health as well as providing assistance to the poor.[259] The 1990s saw an increase in action and establishment of organizations for the benefit of impoverished peasants.[260] OECD's *Measuring Well-being in Mexican States* report, Mexico's volunteer participation (i.e., participation in a political party, NGO or volunteer in a philanthropic association) ranged at the lower values from 11 percent to 17 percent and at the higher values from 27 percent to 32 percent.[261] In 2013, the OECD reported between 3 percent and 4 percent increase in solidarity and engagement in Mexico; however, the country still ranks below average in comparison to the rest of the OECD countries.[262] The historical snapshot of Mexico's volunteerism and civic participation seems to spike around those times in which the country has experienced socio-economic or political shocks that drive citizens to action.

As evidence of those spikes, as Chapter II analyzed, the most significant socio-political movements Mexico experienced before the Internet revolution were: the 1968 Tlatelolco student movements, the 1985 manifestations following the earthquakes, and the protests following the electoral fraud of 1988. After the Internet revolution, Mexico's activists have taken advantage of social media networks, particularly of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to expand their protest base. Most, if not all, of the relevant socio-political issues the nation has undergone have been augmented in some form through social media networks. From the indigenous rights issues that the Zapatista movement

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[258] Ibid., 158.

[259] Ibid., 159–60.

[260] Ibid.

[261] OECD, *Measuring Well-Being in Mexican States* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015), 59–60, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264246072-en. Note: the OECD cites the statistical data was gathered from The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) 2012.

[262] OECD, "How's Life? 2013. Measuring Well-Being | Mexico," 2013, http://www.oecd.org/statistics/HsL-Country-Note-MEXICO.pdf.

highlighted, to the "I am 132" school movement, the "Indispensable Internet" tax increase, to the public indignation following the Ayotzinapa enforced disappearances, these movements have had a greater impact due to the multiplicity power of social media.

Nevertheless, the argument as to whether social media promotes action or just an illusion of action may not be settled for some time. Specific to Mexico, Froehling summarizes:

> But war in cyberspace is different from the war in Chiapas. In Chiapas, people are daily hurt by the conflict, through lack of resources and mistreatment, resulting in injury and death. Displace war into cyberspace, and these details retreat. Left by itself, cyberspace connects people in only a limited way and provides an illusion of participation … In the case of the Chiapas uprising: The effect produced must be measured not in the numbers of times "Chiapas" appears on Web sites or discussion lists but in the multiple effects produced outside cyberspace. Where cyberspace meets other flows of reality is where its potential lies.[263]

In Mexico, a country so culturally and socially connected, it appears that social media has expanded collective action, but a significant evolution may still be years away.

D.   STRENGTHENED POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Social media has strengthened political activism in Mexico. Historically, Mexico's social conflict resolution has been negotiated via a dialogue. Braun contends that "a *dialogo publico* [a collective dialogical rite] fits into the traditional … appeal through which Mexicans have come before their higher authorities to express their grievances, petition for their rights, and seek restitution."[264] Given the historical patrimonial relationship between the state and its citizens, in Mexico, a dialogue signifies more than a negotiation. Braun argues, "a dialogue presumes [that] two individuals … respect one another … do not fear or hate another."[265] In Mexico's case, arriving at a dialogue implies that the citizens no longer fear or resent their one-time oppressor; and that the state respects society as an independent entity.

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[263] Oliver Froehling, "The Cyberspace 'War of Ink and Internet' in Chiapas, Mexico," *Geographical Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 304–5, doi:10.2307/216010.

[264] Braun, "Protests of Engagement," 514.

[265] Ibid.

Social media, then, impacts political activism in Mexico as it opens more opportunities for activists and government authorities to resource to discourse rather than violence. As discussed in Chapter II, the 1968 Tlatelolco student movement and the 1985 mobilization following the Mexico City earthquakes resulted in meaningful dialogue between the state and its citizens. In the Tlatelolco case, Braun argues, "[the students] called for *dialogo publico* knowing it could not happen."[266] Arguments for President Díaz Ordaz's refusal to accommodate the students' request have ranged, but a common narrative holds that the regime's absolute power encountered no equal or greater opposing force to give dialogue a true consideration.[267] The institutions that could have challenged the state were not strong individually and failed to collaborate to rival the state. For example, the National Action Party (PAN) did not pose a political threat, as the PRI held absolute control. Further, the state controlled the national media, much like it did society, and blunt criticism of the government carried risks that few media sources were willing to take. Last, the few leftist groups or guerillas that emerged could easily be suppressed.

In contrast, the international political pressure the Zapatista movement generated in 1994 by combining email communiques and effective use of media with traditional guerilla warfare tactics, Rondfeld et al. argue, led to dialogue and changed the outcome of the movement.[268] Initially, the state responded to the Zapatista uprising, much like it did in the 1968 student movement, first dismissing the movement's significance, but then promptly sending the Army to suppress it.[269] Unlike the self-promoted marketing campaign of the 1968 students' movement, the Zapatistas' effective use of the Internet and new media made the difference in the Army's response to the movement. Nationally, the Zapatistas created a strong use of the civil society and of traditional media to generate a strong followership. As Froehling contends, "twelve-days into the conflict and after 145

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[266] Ibid., 530.

[267] Ibid.

[268] David Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1999), 2.

[269] Ibid.

officially counted deaths, the government declared a cease-fire."[270] As Ronfeldt et al. argue in their 1998 Research And Development (RAND) study, "in a social netwar where a set of NGO activists challenge a government … the battle tends to be largely about information—about who knows what, when, where, how, and why."[271] Thus, once international leaders became inundated with information, Martinez-Torres contends, the multi-scalar pressure the Internet built "went well beyond the threshold the Mexican government could tolerate."[272] In the end, Martinez-Torres holds: "the Zapatista support movement successfully stopped the shooting war in 1994 because the Mexican government is susceptible to adverse publicity."[273] Froehling also corroborates this notion by stating, "International support was a life-support system of protection from military annihilation."[274] The power the media publicity created would have been difficult to produce without the Internet.

E.   CONCLUSION

Chapter IV answered the thesis question of whether social media transformed civic engagement in Mexico. Yes, it has. A comparison analysis of civic engagement in terms of four previously defined characteristics civic awareness, collective identity, collective action, and political activism was conducted to derive the entire answer. The analysis concluded that social media networks have transformed civic engagement in four different ways:

1) Social media networks have increased civic awareness in Mexico. The multiplicity power of the networks has increased the number of citizens that can receive pertinent civic information.

2) Social media networks have yet to unify a more collective identity of the Mexican population in comparison to pre-Internet era. The analysis found that Mexico's

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[270] Froehling, "The Cyberspace 'War of Ink and Internet' in Chiapas, Mexico," 295.

[271] Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico*, 119.

[272] Maria Elena Martinez-Torres, "Civil Society, the Internet, and the Zapatistas," *Peace Review* 13, no. 3 (2001): 347.

[273] Ibid., 348.

[274] Froehling, "The Cyberspace 'War of Ink and Internet' in Chiapas, Mexico," 296.

continuous collective struggle to perform as a civil society autonomous of the state, has forged a sense of national collective unity that social media communities have yet being able to replicate. And perhaps may lessen.

3) Social media networks have expanded collective action. Mexico has had a decent history of ordinary citizen action such as volunteering, fundraising, and donating. However, protest-driven citizen action such as a campaigning for a specific political agenda (i.e., addressing income inequality or transgender rights) has been slower to evolve due to citizen apprehension and the state's subjection. Over the last decade, Mexico has seen a continuous evolution of Twitter movements that augment or replace the work that offline civic organizations do; however, the nation has room for improvement. Today, the country falls below average in comparison to the rest of the OECD countries in terms of civic engagement actions such as voter participation and volunteering. Although, social media networks have expanded the channels for civic participation in Mexico, significant change may still be forthcoming as there are citizens that slack rather than act.

4) Social media networks have strengthened political activism. The power social media has given political activism in Mexico, is the pressure that the international community places on the government, that prior to the Internet era was difficult to achieve.

Chapter V will draw the final conclusions, highlight key points of the research and well as provide suggestions for future research.

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V.   CONCLUSION

Social media has transformed civic engagement in Mexico. This thesis, through comparative analysis of Mexican civic engagement before and after the Internet revolution, examined four aspects of civic engagement. The thesis's comparative analysis revealed that social media has transformed civic engagement in three of four of those aspects. Social media has increased civic awareness, broadened collective action, and strengthened political activism. While the fourth aspect, collective identity, does not seem currently transformed by social media, the possibility remains that social media could transform Mexicans' sense of collective identity in the future.

Prior to the Internet revolution, Mexico's civil society organized covertly, transferred information via clandestine meetings, self-published magazines, and word of mouth. Students and activists maintained a stronghold of the movements' meetings and activities prior to taking them public. In the late 1960s, expressing public dissent against the Mexican federal authorities implied a risk of imprisonment, injury, or even death. The massacre of over 300 university students-activists, faculty, and unarmed civilians on October 2, 1968, as they protested against Diaz Ordaz's authoritarian regime, shocked society into taking the initial step toward civil autonomy. In the morning of September 19, 1965, two powerful earthquakes struck the heart of Mexico City, killing over 10,000 people and affecting 30,000 more. The aftershocks were not only felt on Mexico's soil, but literally shook society into civic action. Faced with a paralyzed government, over a million people mobilized, organized, volunteered, donated, and acted without either the digital advancements of today or the assistance of the government. Civic engagement in Mexico had been born.[275]

The Internet revolution in the early 1990s further opened up platforms for activists, people, and politicians to engage, collaborate, and campaign about issues important to them. Social media primarily increased the level of information that the Mexican society was privy to. Activists soon leveraged the ubiquity, multiplicity, and

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[275] Bilello, "Mexico," 82–85.

anonymity advantages of social media communities and began organizing and promoting social and political movements.[276] Facebook and Twitter became the two most popular sources of collaboration for Mexicans. Twitter social movements such as #NoteAnules #InternetNecesario #AyotzinapaSomosTodos drew enough national and international attention into Mexico to pressure government officials to engage in dialogue. Twelve years after the Zapatistas' first email communique, social media networks continue to evolve and shape civic engagement in Mexico.

A.   FINDINGS

The comparison analysis of civic engagement in Mexico before and after the Internet revolution found that social media has transformed civic engagement in Mexico in the four different aspects:

1) Social media networks have increased civic awareness in Mexico. A significant contribution that social media has given the Mexican population is the accessibility to a vast amount of information. A civically informed society is more likely to demand and chose government officials that accurately represent its needs, in turn bringing the country closer to being a liberal democracy.

2) Social media has yet to foster a more unified collective identity of the Mexican population compared to the pre-Internet era. Mexico's continuous collective struggle to perform as a civil society autonomous of the state forged a sense of national collective unity that social media communities have yet to replicate and perhaps may lessen.[277]

3) Social media networks have expanded civic action. Over the last decade, Mexico has seen a continuous evolution of Twitter movements that augment or replace the work that offline civic organizations do; however, the nation has room for improvement. Today, the country falls below average in comparison to the rest of the OECD countries in terms of civic engagement actions such as voter participation and volunteering. Although social media networks have expanded the channels for civic

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[276] Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-García, "Cyberactivism through Social Media," 8.

[277] Leal Martínez, "De Pueblo a Sociedad Civil," 448.

participation in Mexico, significant change may still be forthcoming as there are some citizens that slack rather than act.

4) Social media networks have strengthened political activism. The broadcast and multiplicity effects of Twitter and Facebook make it more likely that a global audience will witness a socio-political movement. In Mexico, at a minimum, the added attention could motivate authorities to engage in public dialogue and conflict resolution rather than violence. Another evidence of strengthened political activism is the recent emergence and electoral victories of several independent government officials, indicating that Mexicans are better informed today, and can elect from a wider range of political actors than they were decade ago due in part to the political publicity they review and exchange online.

B.   IMPLICATIONS

As many utilities as social media has to further civic engagement in developing countries like Mexico, there are also implications that must be pointed out.

First, advocating for Mexico's society to engage, participate, and collaborate in social media communities brings out the implication that people could also leverage these communication channels for less than civic needs. Mexico's high number of criminal and drug-trafficking organizations makes it likely that these groups are utilizing social media networks to further their criminal activities, hurting rather than benefiting the nation.

Second, advocating for Mexico's federal government to guarantee the delivery of Internet access to disenfranchised sectors of the population, poses the risk of prioritizing the utopia of the Internet over providing basic socio-economic needs. The reality in Mexico is that most communities in "need" of the Internet also require jobs, schools, electricity, potable water, roads, parks, cultural centers, and more. The peasants, farmers, and laborers of those regions are unlikely to get online—if they first need to secure their livelihood.

Third, the significant Internet penetration trends in Mexico and the high demand for social media make it likely that the Internet will reach Mexico's most disenfranchised sectors. The problem lies in that the poorest segments of the population also house

communities with a deep sense of collective identity, like the Zapatistas. The social cohesion of such communities is deeply rooted in language, culture, traditions, and even, their rule of law. Infiltrating digital media into these communities carries the risk of eroding some of the cultural and ethnolinguistic heritage these societies have fought to preserve. Could imposing digital media onto these communities be a form of oppression? Are we asking these societies to acculturate into the global world? On the one hand, the concern exists that these communities are victims of the digital divide social media creates as they are left behind unaware of civic events; but, on the other hand, social media could also erode their social cohesion and sense of community as they become more involved in the cyber world.

Fourth, concern arises when social media's impact on civic engagement is exaggerated or oversimplified.[278] Given the complexities of conducting extensive empirical data analysis, some research could draw on broad generalizations, skewness of data, data overestimations that produce a false sense on impact.[279]

C.   FUTURE RESEARCH

Research of social media as driver of civic engagement is promising yet challenging. The promising aspect of social media research is that experts from a wide range of fields such as, media, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, communications could benefit from understanding factors that drive citizenry. The difficulty comes in that while civic engagement has objective components (e.g., voter turnout, volunteer participation rates, philanthropic contributions) that are relatively easy to quantify, civic engagement also has several subjective components such as trust, identity, motivation, or happiness that can be harder to measure.

Future research and trend data analysis from Twitter and Facebook could be beneficial in understanding specific aspects of civic engagement users' political behavior around election times or likelihood of voter participation. However, emphasis on field

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[278] Sean Aday et al., "Blogs and Bullets II New Media and Conflict After the Arab Spring" (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2012), 15, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW80.pdf.

[279] Ibid., 4,15.

research that seeks to understand subjective characteristics of civic engagement can also prove beneficial. Some questions to explore in future research are:

How can social media tools foster trust between the government and its citizens?

What is the construct of a successful online movement?

What can we learn from unsuccessful online movements?

How can online movements' relevancy be sustained?

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